

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12, and 14-23 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1, 7, 12, 14-17, and 21-23 are amended to more clearly define the invention. Claims 1, 12, 14-17, and 22 are independent.

The amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicant also notes that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Claims 15-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as containing non-statutory subject matter. The claims have been amended to address the Examiner's concerns.

Claims 1, 12, 14-15, and 18-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morley et al. (WO 99/59335) in view of Kandasamy et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,513,314).

Claims 2-10 and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morley et al. in view of Kandasamy et al., and further in view of Takamori (U.S. Pat. No. 5,287,186).

These rejections are respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

An exemplary embodiment of the claimed invention, as defined by, for example, independent claim 1, is directed to a digital content reproducing system that includes a movie company terminal which stores and manages a digital content of movies, a content delivery terminal in communication with the movie company terminal via a network, and a projecting system which is connected to the content delivery terminal via the network, receives the digital content from the content delivery terminal via the network, and reproduces the digital content to show a movie. The projecting system includes a reproducing device, and a backup reproducing device that decodes digital content while the reproducing device periodically sends a first predetermined signal indicating progress of reproducing of the reproducing

device to the backup reproducing device. The backup reproducing device starts processing the decoded digital content in synchronization with the predetermined signal when the reproducing device stops sending the predetermined signal.

The present invention provides a digital content reproducing system that includes a reproducing device, and a backup reproducing device that decodes signals while the reproducing device periodically sends a predetermined signal indicating progress of the reproducing device to the backup reproducing device. The backup reproducing device starts processing the decoded digital content in synchronization with the predetermined signal when the reproducing device stops sending the predetermined signal.

In the present invention, a reproducing device starts decoding (step A1, FIG. 7) and then sends a time code ("TC") or a first predetermined signal to a backup reproducing device (step A2). In response to the first predetermined signal, the backup reproducing device starts confirming periodical receipt of the TCs and decoding process (step A3). A TC indicates the time in content as shown in its name "time code."

With reference to TCs, the backup reproducing device decodes signals simultaneously with decoding by the reproducing device. A TC or a first predetermined signal thus has functions not only to indicate operational status of the reproducing device, but also to indicate position in the content currently reproduced by the reproducing device and direct the backup reproducing device to decode signals corresponding to the position.

If reproduction by the reproducing device accidentally stops and the transmission of TCs also stop, then, in response to failure of the receipt of a TC, the backup reproducing device can immediately know where reproducing by the reproduction device stops in the content and which signals to decode to send content data. Therefore, according to the present invention, the backup reproducing device can send the appropriate position of content data immediately after failure to receive a first predetermined signal.

In this manner, the present invention increases the reliability of all aspects of the content production, delivery and presentation. The present invention also makes it easier to deal with the content and does not subject the content to the risk of degradation and/or damage. (Page 2, lines 3-8).

II. THE 35 U.S.C. § 101 REJECTION

The Examiner alleges that claims 15-17 "are directed to non-statutory subject matter."

While Applicant submits that claims 15-17 very clearly recite statutory subject matter, to speed prosecution the claims have been amended in a manner believed by Applicant to address the concerns.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection respectfully is requested.

III. THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. Morley et al. in view of Kandasamy et al.

Regarding the rejection of claims 1, 12, 14-15, and 18-23, the Examiner alleges that the Morley et al. reference would have been combined with the Kandasamy et al. reference to form the claimed invention. Applicant submits, however, that these references would not have been combined.

None of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of the present invention including a projecting system that includes a reproducing device, a backup reproducing device that decodes signals while periodically sending a predetermined signal indicating progress of reproducing of the reproducing device to the backup reproducing device, and the backup reproducing device starts processing the decoded digital content in synchronization with the predetermined signal when the reproducing device stops sending the predetermined signal.

Indeed, the Examiner does not allege that the applied references teach or suggest these features.

Moreover, according to Kandasamy et al., the disclosed heart-beat datagram does not indicate position in the content currently being reproduced by a reproducing device, and does not direct a backup reproducing device to decode signals corresponding to the position. In other words, there is no process by the backup reproducing devices disclosed in the prior art references that synchronizes processing by the reproducing device in accordance with the heart-beat datagram. Applicant notes the description that "[t]he servers then asynchronously perform the write data requests 66, 68," as contained in Kandasamy et al., at column 11, line 49, which teaches away from synchronized processing.

Therefore, according to the proposed combination of Morley and Kandasamy et al.,

when an error occurs at the reproducing device, before sending appropriate content data instead of by using the reproducing device, the reproducing device must perform procedures of: informing the backup reproducing device about the position in the content or signals to be decoded; and retrieving corresponding signals from its storage device and decoding the corresponding signals. These procedures require time to perform, and, consequently, it is difficult or impossible for the backup reproducing device to send the appropriate position of the content data with out delay.

Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 12, 14-15, and 18-23.

B. Morley et al. in view of Kandasamy et al. and Takamori

Regarding the rejection of claims 2-10 and 16-18, the Examiner alleges that the Morley et al. reference would have been combined with the Kandasamy et al. reference and further alleges that the Takamori reference would have been combined with the Morley et al. reference and the Kandasamy et al. reference to form the claimed invention. Applicant submits, however, that these references would not have been combined.

None of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of the present invention including a projecting system that includes a reproducing device, and a backup reproducing device that decodes signals while the reproducing device periodically sends a first predetermined signal a digital content reproducing system that includes a reproducing device, and a backup reproducing device that decodes signals while the reproducing device periodically sends a first predetermined signal indicating progress of the reproducing device to the backup reproducing device. Further, the backup reproducing device starts processing the decoded digital content in synchronization with the predetermined signal when the reproducing device stops sending the predetermined signal.

Indeed, the Examiner does not allege that the applied references teaches or suggests these features.

Moreover, Applicant submits that these references would not have been combined as alleged by the Examiner.

Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 2-10 and 16-18.

IV. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

Claim 1 is objected to because of alleged informality. Applicant has amended claim 1 as suggested by the Office, such that the limitation "that decodes signals" has been changed to -- that decodes digital contents --.

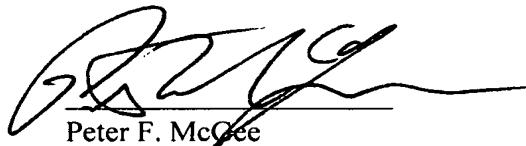
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-10, 12, and 14-23, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the application be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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